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Office of the Political Adviser,
Hqs US European Command,
c/o American Embassy, Paris.

November 15, 1963

Dear John:

I mentioned to you on the phone Tuesday that I was planning to send a telegram to the Department giving the EUCOM reaction to Bonn's 1768 to State of 11 November. After our conversation, I decided there would not be much utility in my doing so. My military colleagues agreed in the light of the explanation you had given me and set about to inform the JCS of their disagreement with Bonn. The following is a draft of a message to the JCS they are now in the process of clearing. It is in the main based on the telegram I had prepared to send to the Department. I do not know whether this message will be cleared, but in any event thought you should be acquainted with the line of thinking here.

1. Determination of Soviet intentions has been an important aim of Allied autobahn procedures, and assists in differentiating between local harassments and directed incidents. It should be recalled that tripartite agreement on SHLO 600/128 was reached with considerable difficulty, and that the document is still in effect for all three allies. In this connection, it is recalled that the commander of the French convoy on 5 Nov was authorized to implement SHLO 600/128 in the event his convoy was blocked.

2. Invocation of SHLO 600/128 applies pressure to the blockage, and is a useful complement to high-level diplomatic activity. Failure to use SHLO 600/128 prior to diplomatic intervention is tantamount to acceptance on our part of administrative blockage. Diplomatic intervention without first having exhausted local efforts may make it more - no less - difficult for the Soviets to back down. Therefore the procedures of SHLO 600/128 should be implemented before resorting to high-level diplomatic intervention if we are to preclude administrative delay and undue harassment on the autobahn.

John C. Ausland, Esquire,
Department of State, BTF:GER,
Washington 25, DC.

/3. As a related

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3. As a related matter, concur strongly with Bonn that in the event of another convoy detention in which we impose SHLO 600/128 and are blocked by Soviet APCs, we must refuse to begin processing until APCs are removed. Regardless of the time at which this step is taken, before or after diplomatic intervention, the decision to invoke SHLO 600/128 must include the parallel decision to refuse to begin processing while the convoy is under duress.

I think the military here recognize that this matter is largely political, and I think they also realize that the prevailing view in Washington is more in sympathy with Messrs. Thompson and McGhee than with their point of view; however, they feel - and I think rightly - that they should have an opportunity to speak to this very important matter.

I had hoped that we would have an opportunity to talk to Ambassador Thompson while he was in Europe with Mr. Ball. Unfortunately, he did not come back through Paris. I have the feeling that we over here are somewhat in the dark as to Washington's thinking about the correct tactics to be followed in dealing with future Soviet actions on the autobahn as well as the rationale behind Washington's thinking. As I mentioned in my previous letter to you, I do not want to add to your burdens in asking for explanations, but I wonder if you have some memoranda or position papers which you could send me which would give us a little clearer appreciation of Washington thinking on this matter.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Alan

Alan G. James

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